

Venue:
Community

Goal:
Promote Quitting
of Tobacco Use

Activity:
C3.01 Promote
Quit Line Services



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- **Population (Census 2000): 102,979**
- **Total Households (Census 2000): 38,852**
- **Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (BRFSS/ATS 2003): 18 percent**
- **Estimated Number of Adult Cigarette Smokers (DOH 2004): 13,900**
- **Number of Students: 19,113**
- **Eighth Grade Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (HYS 2002): 11 percent**

Skagit County Tobacco Quit Line Promotion Strategies

Project Description

Skagit County created a grocery bag contest as a way to increase the number of quit line calls in the county, raise community awareness about quitting, promote the quit line and the Great American Smokeout, and involve youth in tobacco prevention and cessation efforts.



Inputs Rationale

- In the past, Skagit County used a variety of approaches to promote the Washington Tobacco Quit Line. Skagit tried a new promotion as part of the Great American Smokeout in November 2003.
 - Sixth graders were chosen to be involved in the project because students are generally between the ages of 11- and 12-years old, the age research shows is the average age that youth first try cigarettes.
- Target Audiences**
- Primary: Sixth grade students across Skagit County
 - Secondary: Grocery shoppers - especially smokers, parents, teachers, store managers, and employees

Resources

- Staff**
- Two county tobacco program staff were involved in the project, a health education intern, and the tobacco program manager.
 - The project took about 30 hours over eight weeks.
- Funding**
- American Cancer Society provided a \$250 mini-grant.
 - State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program funds paid for county staff time.
 - Prizes were donated by businesses.
- Partnerships**
- The American Cancer Society, Food Pavilion stores in Skagit County, Skagit County HEAT youth coalition, Skagit County schools

Activities

1. The Skagit tobacco program staff developed a contest for sixth grade students to color grocery bags with a Tobacco Quit Line message that then were distributed to stores for use on the Great American Smokeout.
2. Staff determined the guidelines, timelines, judging criteria, and prizes and asked stores to donate grocery bags and then to use the decorated bags.
3. A letter was sent to teachers to explain the contest and schools were contacted to see if they would allow students to participate.
4. Skagit HEAT youth coalition members and a county health education intern wrote a grant to the American Cancer Society for funding and letters to corporations for prizes.
5. Youth coalition members transported the grocery bags from stores, to the classrooms for kids to decorate, and back to the stores for use.
6. Students were given two weeks to complete their art. County tobacco program staff, youth coalition members, and parents judged the bags.
7. News releases were sent to local media before and after the contest, and an article was published in a local hospital's newsletter.
8. Prizes and thank you letters were sent to teachers. A final project report was submitted to the American Cancer Society to receive reimbursement for the grant funds.

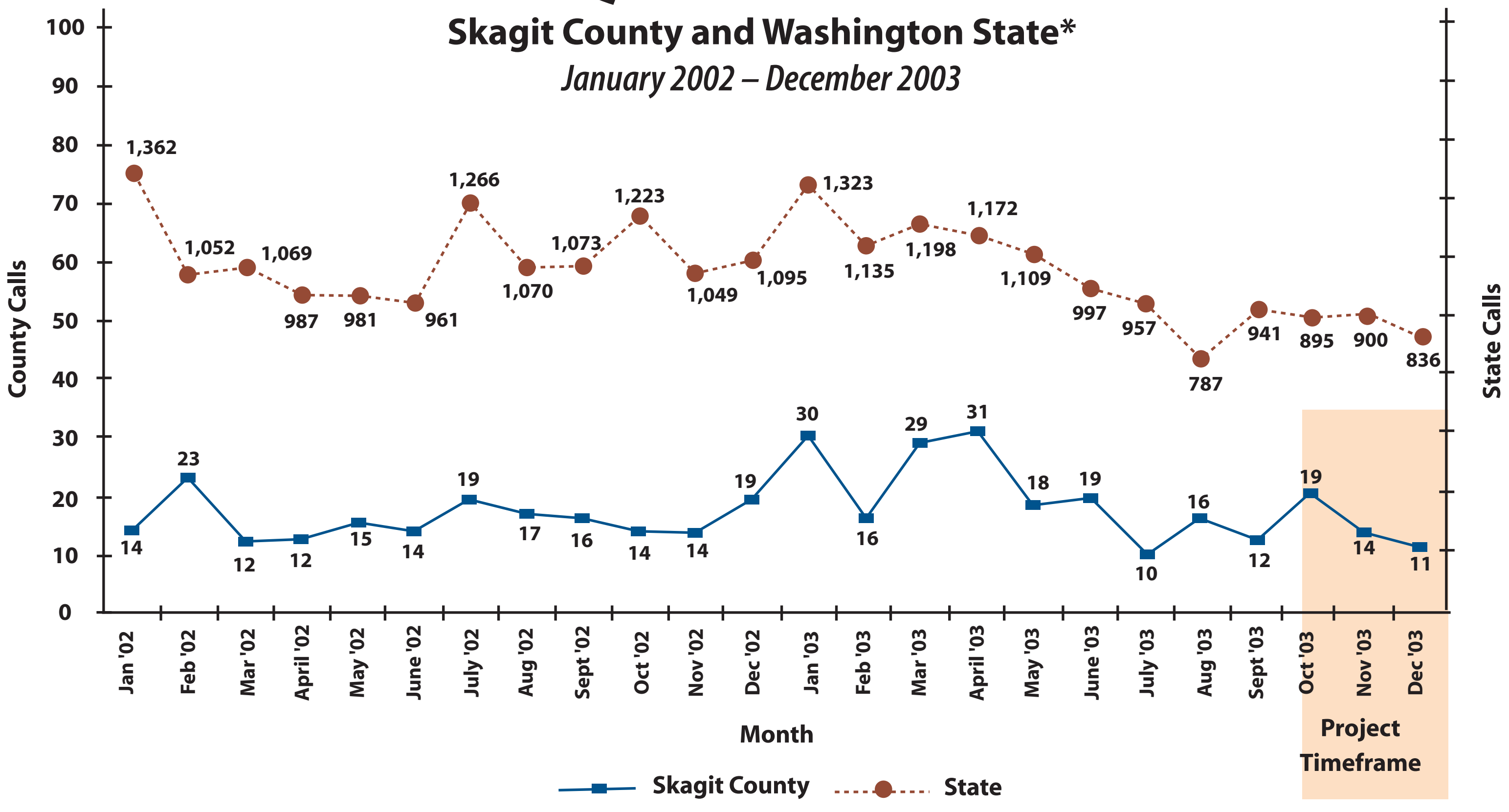
Outputs

1. The Skagit HEAT youth coalition asked all four Food Pavilion stores in the county to participate and all agreed. The stores donated about 600 bags.
2. Every sixth-grade teacher in all 25 elementary schools in Skagit County was invited to participate in the contest. Eighteen classrooms from eight elementary schools participated, and 500 students colored the bags.
3. Twenty youth coalition members, two program staff, and three parents judged the decorated bags. Nearly 90 prizes were awarded, including gift certificates to Food Pavilion, free McDonald's ice cream cones, and gift cards to the local movie theater for two matinee tickets. The classroom with the best overall entries from the school with the highest rate of participation won the grand prize and was treated to a pizza party. Twenty-four students attended the party and two youth coalition members conducted a T.A.T.U. presentation for the winners.
4. Stores reported that the bags were well received by customers. One newsletter article was printed before the event and another was printed after. The American Cancer Society printed a newsletter article about the event in its publication.

Evaluation

- Skagit County quit line calls in the fourth quarter (October, November, and December) 2003 were compared against the same months in 2002. There was not any measurable call volume change. Fourth-quarter quit line calls statewide were lower in 2003 than in 2002. Skagit County's fourth quarter percent of calls statewide increased slightly from 1.5 percent in 2002 to 1.9 percent in 2003. (1.7 percent of the state population resides in Skagit County.)

Quit Line Calls
Skagit County and Washington State*
January 2002 – December 2003



Source: Washington State Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Assessment and Evaluation

*Calls include "Call Types" classified as "Information", "Resider", and "Tobacco User" only. New data system begun with July 2001 data

Lessons Learned

- The number of decorated bags we received surprised us, making judging more complex than we had planned. The original idea was for all county youth to participate, narrowing the scope to focus only on sixth-grade youth made the project manageable.
- To make this project better, more time will be spent promoting the event, including posters or window paint displays in stores promoting the project and more phone calls and follow-ups with the media. The media will be encouraged to visit a classroom while they were decorating bags, to take pictures of bag distribution in stores, to interview people receiving bags, and to attend the grand prize pizza party.
- This was a great project because it was relatively easy to coordinate, and because it involved and reached a lot of different people. Schools, parents, stores, and shoppers all were exposed to the quit line and youth were given the opportunity to be involved in promoting tobacco cessation.